



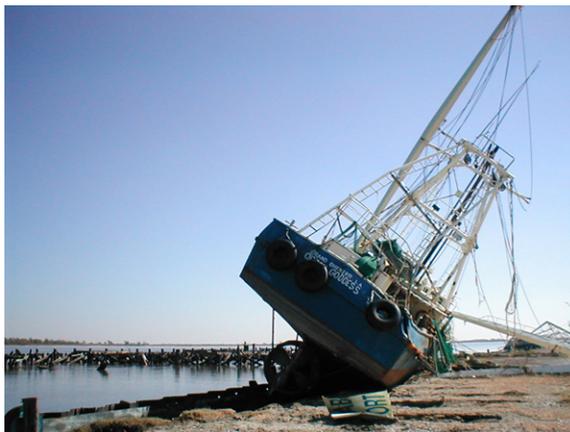
As a steward of our nation's coastal and marine environments, NOAA addresses immediate and long-term environmental threats through its Office of Response and Restoration (OR&R). Scientists are on call around-the-clock to provide the U.S. Coast Guard and other emergency responders with critical information to help minimize environmental damage caused by oil and hazardous chemical spills. Environmental experts assess ecosystems compromised by historic or ongoing contamination and work with other organizations to conduct remediation, restoration, and monitoring of critical natural resources.

Protecting and Restoring Texas's Coastal and Marine Areas

NOAA trust resources in Texas include 3,359 miles of coast, millions of acres of coastal wetlands, and valuable shrimp, crab, and oyster fisheries. Coastal hazardous waste sites and oil spills threaten these natural resources. Petrochemical ports on the Texas coast are some of the busiest in the world. Crude and refined oils are transported locally, regionally, and internationally through a network of tankers, barges, and pipelines. Texas is also home to a large land-based and offshore oil and gas industry. The state map on the reverse page shows key response and restoration activities in the past year.

Emergency Response

NOAA scientists and other emergency response specialists assisted the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in responding to oil and chemical incidents caused by Hurricane Rita. NOAA provided information on flood water levels, supplied satellite imagery and maps to support search and rescue efforts, and



Shrimp boat damaged by Hurricane Rita near Port Arthur.



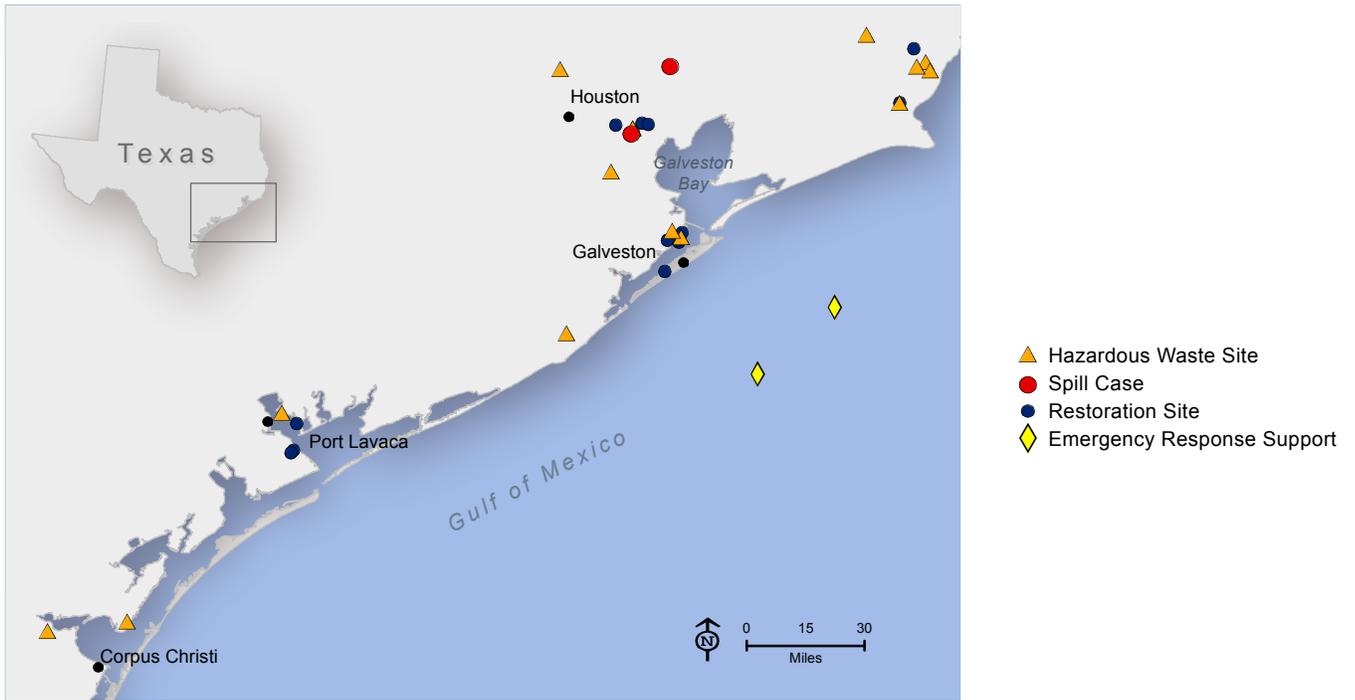
Newly constructed pier at Lavaca Bay

coordinated scientific and environmental support during the response. Following Hurricane Rita, NOAA assisted with the damage assessment of facilities and vessels and responded to numerous oil spills and leaking hazardous material containers.

Assessment and Restoration

The Lavaca Bay/Point Comfort Site in Calhoun County includes portions of an industrial facility owned and operated by Alcoa, Inc. as well as a dredge spoil island and nearby areas of Lavaca Bay. Past industrial activities at the facility resulted in the release of mercury and hydrocarbon compounds into Lavaca Bay and the surrounding environment. NOAA and other trustees worked cooperatively with EPA and Alcoa to evaluate both ecological risk and natural resource injury during an integrated process. As a result of this cooperation, remediation and restoration planning were combined,

saving time and money. Protective cleanup is now finished, 729 acres of coastal prairie preserved, 70 acres of salt marsh and more than 11 acres of oyster reef created, and lighted piers and new docks constructed – all benefiting recreational fishing in the bay.



Research

NOAA collaborates with other federal, state, and local programs to develop innovative approaches to protecting marine and estuarine environments through research and synthesis of information. The Coastal Response Research Center (CRRC) brings together the resources of a research-oriented university and the field expertise of OR&R to conduct and oversee basic and applied research, conduct outreach, and encourage strategic partnerships in spill response, assessment, and restoration.

NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration—Protecting our Coastal Environment

For further information about NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration, please call (301) 713-2989 or visit our Web site at response.restoration.noaa.gov

